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Manila After Marcos: Hunting the Nest Egg

Foes Try to Strip Marcos of U.S. Assets

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 — Representatives of the new Philippine Government and some members of Congress said today that they would take steps to try to strip former President Ferdinand E. Marcos of millions of dollars of assets in the United States that might have been gained illegally.

This development arose as Mr. Marcos and his entourage of about 90 relatives and friends arrived on a United States Air Force plane in Hawaii for what may be a prolonged stay there. They had stayed overnight in the United States territory of Guam.

The White House and State Department both insisted that President Reagan wanted the Marcos party to feel welcome in this country. But a dispute seemed to be developing over Mr. Marcos's assets, with legislation being drafted in Congress to allow the new Manila Government to seek Mr. Marcos's holdings in this country.

Heherson Alvarez, chairman of the new Government's transition team in the United States, said recovering of funds that might have been attained illegally by the Marcos family was "a very important issue."

'Crucial to Developing Country'

"It's crucial to a developing country like ours," he said in an interview in the office of the former Filipino Ambassador.

Another longtime foe of the Marcos family, Stephen Psinakis, said in an interview in San Francisco that he had spoken with the new authorities in Manila and was helping them track down Marcos assets in the United States, which he said he had records on.

Representative Stephen J. Solarz, Democrat of Brooklyn, who is chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asia, said today that he would introduce legislation soon that would enable the Philippines "to come before a Federal court in order to attach and recover the Marcos assets in the United States to the extent that they can prove that the Marcoses engaged in official misconduct and unjustly enriched themselves by using public offices for private gains."

"Right now, it appears that Federal courts do not have jurisdiction over a civil suit by a foreign government against one of its citizens in order to recover corruptly acquired assets," he said in an interview.

He said he was advised by legislative counsel in the House that his legislation could be applied retroactively to funds gained by the Marcoses in the past.

Solarz Held Hearings

Mr. Solarz, who has been one of the most severe critics of Mr. Marcos, held hearings this year on the reported real estate holdings of the Marcoses in this country. He estimated the holdings in the New York area alone at more than \$300 million.

The Central Intelligence Agency has told Mr. Solarz's committee, an aide said, that Mr. Marcos and his wife, Imelda, had holdings valued at more than \$2 billion in the Philippines, the United States and elsewhere.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said discussion about taking away the Marcoses holdings "has no standing within the Administration." The State Department repeatedly said today that Mr. Marcos was a longtime friend of the United States and was welcome here.

Mr. Solarz said Mr. Marcos's only known income was his presidential salary of \$5,700 a year.

"There is a strong presumption that he had a very good financial adviser or acquired the millions of dollars he has through presumptively improper means," Mr. Solarz said.

'Sanctuary and Not Immunity'

Since Mr. Reagan had issued a welcome to Mr. Marcos, Mr. Solarz was asked why he was now raising this problem for the former President.

"I think it was entirely appropriate for the President, to avoid bloodshed and civil war, to give Marcos an opportunity to come to the United States for a peaceful transition of power," Mr. Solarz said. "But the President offered him sanctuary and not immunity. He certainly didn't offer him immunity against civil proceedings brought by the Government of the Philippines to recover a fortune stolen from the Philippines."

Mr. Marcos has been dogged by questions about corruption and his as-

sets for many years. There have been documented reports of extensive real estate holdings by people close to the Marcoses in various places, including Hawaii. And Mrs. Marcos, on her frequent trips abroad, has been known to spend lavishly while shopping.

Mr. Solarz said the "value of their properties in the New York area alone are worth two to three times that of the total American economic aid in the Philippines in a year." In the current fiscal year, the Philippines receives about \$180 million in such aid.

Damaged Economy Cited

"Given the miserable shape of the Philippine economy, this is one way we can help the Government acquire the resources it needs," Mr. Solarz said of his legislation.

"I don't think it would serve the best interests of the United States and of Philippine-American relations to put ourselves in the position of obstructing efforts by the Philippine Government to recover the ill-begotten gains of the Marcos family," he said. "Ultimately, those properties belong to the people of the Philippines."

In 1979, after the Shah of Iran left his country, an effort was made by the new Iranian Government to attach his assets in the United States. Mr. Solarz said that the effort failed because the Iranians lacked official standing in American courts to press their case.

Another possible problem for Mr. Marcos are the human rights abuses charged to his Government. There does not appear to be any legal redress open to Filipinos who might want to charge Mr. Marcos in American courts, State Department officials said. The two Governments lack an extradition treaty because the Senate failed to ratify one signed in 1981.